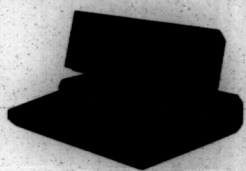


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No peace? Know Jesus.

In any other year, we might think of December as the beginning of another worthy campaign to support the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions — but this is not any other year. September 11 changed everything.

It has come to our attention of late that we live in a world with precious little peace, because there is precious little Jesus. We've always known that, but it took September 11 to shock many of us out of our torpor.

Everyone cries, "Peace! Peace!" but there will be no peace as long as so many people do not know Jesus. Only one thing can possibly bring about the peace we so desperately seek today, and that is the timeless message of the Gospel.

Every Christian should have a deep stirring in his/her soul to go out every day and win the whole world to Jesus, but we know that would be nigh impossible. Since we can't do this task alone, God has given us some magnificent ways to spread our witness farther than would be humanly possible as an individual.

One of those ways is the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, which currently supports nearly 5,000 missionaries and their families stationed across the world whose sole purpose is the presentation of the Gospel to as many lost people as possible.

The major way Southern Baptists support those IMB missionaries is through gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions — LMCO, for short.

It's a fact that many missionaries affiliated with other groups and denominations have to spend almost as much time in the States raising money as they do on the mission field winning the lost to Christ. It's not unusual for these missionaries to be on the mission field for six months at a time, and back home for the other six months of the year traveling from church to church pleading for money.

Not so with Southern Baptist missionaries. Sacrificial giving to LMCO by Southern Baptists each year means that our missionaries can stay on the mission field two years

at a time or even longer, if need be. When they do return to the states on furlough, it's for some well-deserved rest and not to raise money to return to the field.

On the mission field or off, their salaries are covered and full benefits are provided for them and their families. It's the least we can do for them, but don't think for a minute they aren't grateful for everything we do for them. They are very grateful.

Southern Baptists take care of virtually all their needs, so they can concentrate on what's really important. Year after year, Mississippi Baptists can be found at or near the top of the list of biggest LMCO supporters in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

How can this be? Mississippi certainly isn't the largest state in the SBC, and we certainly aren't the richest by any measure. So how is it that our support for LMCO is so out of proportion to our relative influence and wealth?

It's because influence and wealth aren't all that important when one senses a clear call to action from God himself, and obviously Mississippi Baptists have sensed the call not only to support missionaries in a big way but to go ourselves.

One thing that continually amazes our friends in other groups and denominations is when they arrive at some far-flung mission field and one of the first things they hear from the people there is, "You're American missionaries? Ah, yes, the Baptists have already been here."

If it's populated, there's a good chance Baptists have already been there — and there's a good chance Mississippi Baptists have already been there.

We have a keen sense of who we are, and a certain knowledge of *whose* we are. That's a powerful combination, one against which the Enemy cannot possibly stand. It's time we realized that fact all over again.

"PASTOR, TELL YOUR PEOPLE THE CAUSE OF WORLD PEACE IS WON, NOT BY THE MILITARY, BUT BY MISSIONS. LEAD THEM TO GIVE GENEROUSLY TO THE LOTTIE MOON OFFERING FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS."



Great things are happening all over the world for the glory of God and in honor of the sacrifice he made for us through his Son.

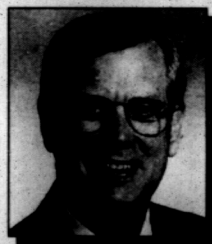
No matter how good our intentions, we would be severely hampered in our goal to accomplish the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) without sacrificial financial support for our missionaries.

Every place our missionaries can't go because of lack of funds is a place where Satan will happily carve out a toehold for himself. One need only survey a map of the world to understand he will do just that whenever and wherever he can.

A concerned God and billions of people are depending on us, for to know Jesus is to know peace. There is no other way. The question is, will we be found faithful?



GUEST OPINION:



Planting with passion

By Jerry Rankin, president
International Mission Board
of the Southern Baptist Convention

For three years the International Mission Board has been focusing the attention of Southern Baptists on "The Unfinished Task." Our Lord commissioned us with the task — to disciple the nations — almost 2,000 years ago.

The rather slow, incremental expansion of the Gospel throughout history has begun to accelerate in recent years, but the task of evangelizing a lost world remains unfinished.

Mission efforts have encountered walls of religious resistance. Government restrictions have inhibited the free flow of Christian witness. Many people groups are still without a church and access to the good news of God's love.

Our theme two years ago was "Loving the Lost." That's where the motivation for our commitment to go, to give and to pray must begin — loving the lost as God loves them.

Last year the focus was "Dispelling the Darkness," a powerful reminder that Jesus is the Light of the world and that the light of the Gospel, once it is made known, overwhelms the

spiritual darkness so prevalent among the nations.

What does it mean to "Plant with Passion"? Is it just a neat alliterated theme? Planting the seeds of the Gospel in foreign soil will happen only when we have a passion to be on mission with God. Only when the passion of our lives is a heart for God can we hope to complete "The Unfinished Task."

Finishing the task means that churches must be planted as a result of our witness and ministry. With 5,000 missionaries, we now have one couple, family or single missionary for every four million people around the world.

Even diligent witnessing by so few among so many will not

get the job done but when churches result, a nucleus of witness and ministry remains that goes beyond the missionary.

When those churches are not dependent on funding, buildings, and leadership from abroad, nothing can inhibit them from multiplying and reproducing into a church-planting movement.

The goal is a network of multiplying, indigenous churches that will ensure that everyone in the world will have access to the Gospel.

There must be someone to plant the church. That is why we must plant our lives in response to God's call.

Why would anyone leave the comforts and security of an

American home and community to go to a foreign country, learn another language and risk disease, loneliness, and rejection? Only because of a passion to plant their lives among the lost so that they too might know Jesus.

At this season of international mission emphasis your investment in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® plants the resources and support needed to win a lost world.

Will you give out of habit, faithfulness to a tradition, and what you feel you can afford in view of pending holiday expenses, or will you give with a passion for a lost world without Christ?

Will you plant the resources that will support missionaries and their efforts to proclaim the Gospel? Will you give generously so that additional people groups can be penetrated with the Gospel?

It is only when we plant the Gospel, our lives, and our gifts with a passion for God and for the Great Commission he has given us, that we can finish "The Unfinished Task."



Missionaries help restore land, reclaim lives

NEW DELHI, India (BP) — Six men encircle a patch of stout seedlings. They shift the rust-red dirt of India with the toes of their shoes. One man, a local Baptist pastor, sweeps his right arm to encompass a whole field of rich, green shoots.

"Last year this was nothing, but look what's happened. Next year if we want, we can move into that field," he says, pointing to a span of scrub brush and tangled grass.

Bad land, poor water yielding a bumper crop? It's not supposed to happen this way.

International Mission Board (IMB) representatives knew their wasteland agricultural project — which helps transform useless land into valued fields — would appeal to local farmers, but what has their heads shaking is how apt some of these farmers are in cultivating the seeds of a church-planting movement.

IMB representatives had long worked with other Great Commission Christians in trying to reach this people group with the gospel.

In the mid-90s, IMB began working with the Far East Broadcasting Association (FEBA) to broadcast agricultural information and Bible stories in the people group's language.

For several years people were interested in the agricultural information, but there



SEEKING BLESSING — Boats line the banks of the Ganges River in India where Hindu believers come to receive a personal blessing from one of the Hindu holy men positioned under the many beach umbrellas along the holy river's banks. (IMB photo)

was little interest in the gospel," explains Rick (not his real name), an IMB representative who has worked with this people group for more than four years.

Then something changed. "The spirit of God moved in such a way that it made what we're doing — and it's so simple — appeal to them, and they took hold of it," he says.

Today in one state of India there are nearly 80 Baptist churches and 300 prayer groups among a people group of some 50,000 people.

When a prayer group reaches between 40-50 adults, local Baptists usually consider the fellowship a church but some groups, which have grown well past the 50-member

mark, have held onto the prayer group term.

"They like being called a 'prayer group,'" Rick explains. "They are a church by anyone's definition, but they want to be called a prayer group because that's what they are."

The awe deepens as the representative recalls how closed to the Gospel this people group once was.

"If it came from outside the village, it was held at a distance," Rick says.

Mistrust of outsiders ran deep. Generations ago this people group settled in poor, isolated parts of India's jungles as a refuge from stronger groups in the region.

The jungles mostly disappeared because of deforestation, but suspicion of outsiders remained.

It made it almost impossible for visitors to develop relationships in which conversations turned to God and his plan for salvation.

The people continued to hold tightly to their local worship — a mix of folk Hindu

and animistic beliefs — which depicted a world of spirits that may help one day, turn deadly the next, says Rick.

So when this people group, once dry as the land they inhabit, began to not only embrace Christianity but started taking the Gospel to other people groups surrounding them, workers watched in wonder.

"They have gone from idol worshiping to leading a mission movement in such a short while," says Rick. "This is a movement of Christ, and it seems to be the beginning of a church-planting movement. Whatever it is, it's exciting."

Allen (not his real name) another IMB representative in the area, says he knows a church-planting movement has begun when it has become the talk of the village.

Record



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Christians trapped

JAKARTA, Indonesia (BP) — Thousands of extremist Muslim fighters armed with automatic weapons are attacking Christian villages in Indonesia's Central Sulawesi province, burning churches and thousands of Christians are fleeing. Perhaps as many as 6,000 Christians are trapped in the predominantly Christian city of Tombo. One missionary in Indonesia from the "Red Warriors" will head through to Tombo and rescue the Christians who have taken refuge there. Afghan and other foreigners are fighting alongside the Muslim militia in Sulawesi, according to news services. A policeman said he saw Muslim fighters stopping civilians at roadblocks and searching them for Christians. "The Christians trapped in the Tombo area are waiting for the slaughter to begin," the missionary reported. "They feel helpless as thousands flee their homes and watch their homes, schools, and churches burned to the ground." The Christians — and even some policemen and soldiers — have been treated and largely defenseless, he said. The few Christians who have organized to resist the Muslim militia are armed only with homemade rifles and bows and arrows, the missionary said. Five truckloads of Indonesian troops arrived Nov. 30 to provide protection. Their arrival apparently frustrated the advance of the Laskar Jihad on the city. The attacks are part of a campaign by Muslim extremists to drive out Christians from the parts of Indonesia where they are a majority and to turn Indonesia into a strict Islamic state. The country's constitution guarantees freedom of religion. While 88% of the population is Muslim, Christians constitute an eight percent minority and in some places are the majority.

Looking back

10 years ago

Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., suffers the worst blow in its four-year struggle to retain accreditation when one of the Southern Baptist seminary's two accrediting agencies places the beleaguered school on probation Dec. 5.

20 years ago

Voters in the City of Pearl turn down local beer sales in a referendum that includes passage of a \$1.5 million school bond. Church leaders, working under a Christian Action Committee headed by pastor Curtis Williams of McLaurin Heights Church, fight the proposal to sell beer in town.

50 years ago

A total of 515 people attend the "M" Night held recently at Bruce Church in Calhoun County. Twenty-seven churches from the area are represented, with Derma, Vardaman, and College Hill Churches showing one hundred percent attendance.

Missionaries planting more than potatoes

EL ALTO, Bolivia (BP) — Potatoes. More than one could ever imagine. More than 200 different varieties, in fact. Potatoes are everywhere: on trucks, in barrels at the open markets, on vendors' tables at the side of the road, and in the hand of a child who eats potatoes like apples.

Here around Lake Titicaca in Bolivia is where the potato originated 14,000 feet above sea level. It's practically an agricultural miracle that anything grows here at all.

The windswept Altiplano (High Plane) is either dust-bowl dry or subject to flash flooding. Little topsoil covers the rock in which potatoes are grown.

This would be one of the wealthiest places in the world, if there were a market for dust and rock. Instead, it is one of the poorest.

This is home to the Aymara, an indigenous people group surviving here for more than 1,000 years, but survival on the Altiplano today is even more difficult.

The Aymara see the cities as the answer to their economic problems, so more than 40,000 a year pour into El Alto, a city on the northern edge of the Altiplano, looking for work. Few find jobs.

As the Aymara migrate, most live under plastic shelters until they can scrape together the mud for a one-room adobe shack. They live on the city's periphery where there is no sanitation, electricity, or running water.

Many of the women sell whatever they can from rickety stands in the market while the men hope for day labor. Their sheep pick at the dry, coarse grass as they move from one patch to the next near rugged dwellings.



PREPARING THE LAND — An Aymara woman heads to her small garden plot along the shores of Lake Titicaca in Bolivia to prepare the land for another year's crop of potatoes and other vegetables. (IMB photo by Matt Jones)

Health conditions are terrible. Nearly 20,000 children under age five die each year from diarrhea and respiratory infections, and nearly a third of all infants between three months and 36 months are malnourished.

As passionately as the Aymara plant potatoes, they worship Pachamama, or Mother Earth. There is no separation between physical and spiritual realms for these people.

Pachamama is the most powerful being after the sun. The Aymara make offerings to satisfy her and other elements of nature.

They expect nature to reciprocate by providing a bountiful livelihood. Their sense of self worth is tied to how others see them and how the gods bless them.

"They live in fear and don't have any

hope," says Kent Shirley, a missionary with the International Mission Board. "We have to share the hope they can have in Christ, but we have to do it in a way they can understand it."

Of the 2.3 million Aymara scattered throughout the Andes Mountains and across four countries, more than two million have no personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Although Spanish is a trade language, most can neither read nor write Spanish or Aymara. Many speak only Aymara. Evangelistic and discipleship methods have to be creative and oral.

"God is doing some things among the Aymara right now and there is a responsiveness," Shirley says. "We have seen more churches started among the Aymara in the past two years than there were in the 10 years before that."

Aymara believers must be the ones to reach other Aymara with the gospel, Shirley says. He sees God moving among lay leaders. More than 20 recently finished a lay missionary training program and all have a desire to start churches.

"It is a long process and it is constant discipleship," Shirley says. "You just have to be patient with the people, show them that you love them and help them understand that their worth is based on how God sees them."

"I believe one day we will see thousands of believers gathered into churches." That takes more than planting potatoes. It takes planting the Gospel with passion.



Parchman ministry inaugurated

PARCHMAN, Miss. (Special) — Calvary Chapel, Parchman, has begun opening its doors each Sunday to family members waiting to visit inmates at the nearby Mississippi State Penitentiary, according to pastor Joe Young.

"Sunday is a big visitation day at Parchman. Calvary Chapel decided to open its doors wide to families who come to visit their loved ones. On the first Sunday of the month — the largest visitation day — the church's doors will open from 8-10 a.m."

"Each hour there will be coffee, juice, a clean restroom, a comfortable resting place, and a brief service," Young said.

On the other Sundays of each month, the church will open to visitors from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. for a brief service and a brief ministry.

Young said the church is the only one of its kind in the Mississippi Delta. It is a major undertaking for the church, many of whom have been their brethren to the state.

"They feel hungry and thirsty, and often they are hungry... The scene is repeated weekly, in the hot summers and cold, wet winters."

"A group of Mississippi Baptists has decided to begin a ministry to make it a little easier for these inmates' families," Young said.

The church is located just west of the penitentiary on Highway 32, about half mile from the penitentiary's main gate. Calvary Chapel and its visitation ministry have no connection to the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

Calvary Chapel has been a "blessing" to the community, Young said.

LOTTIE'S TOP TEN REASONS FOR GIVING TO MISSIONS

All across the Southern Baptist Convention it is the time for intense focus, praying, and giving to missions. It is not as though we only give, pray, care, or involve ourselves in missions once a year, but when the Week of Prayer for International Missions comes in December, and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is at the forefront, we see the need and join in the effort in renewed and exciting ways.

One of the glorious things about the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is that the whole, the entirety — every penny, every dollar, every gift — goes to tell the world beyond us of Jesus' love. It is an unselfish offering of the highest order. I doubt that Lottie Moon ever sat down and wrote a top ten list of reasons for giving to missions, but on her behalf let me suggest a list for us to consider.

REASONS FOR GIVING TO MISSIONS AROUND THE WORLD

10. Gratitude. We have been blessed, so we must give. God never does ask us to give



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

anything that he has not given to us first.

9. Economical. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for world mission causes may well be the most effective offering for evangelistic results to which you could give.

8. Theological. When I give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering I enter into a partnership with Jesus in his worldwide mission enterprise. It is a cause that God has asked me to join. He asks us to join with him and he joins with us because the need is so great.

Every year 80 to 85 million new souls come to live with us here on planet Earth and wherever they might be born God has placed the responsibility of telling the Good News to them on the shoulders of his church.

7. Intellectual. If you want to be a part of the best plan on earth to get the Gospel to every people group everywhere, you would probably come to the conclusion that the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is it.

6. Jovial. Giving brings joy and giving to God's great mission endeavor brings great joy.

5. Functional. Our missionaries on the front lines depend on and deserve our support. It is far better that they focus on reaching a world than having to spend most of their time trying to reach budgetary goals.

4. Transformational. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for world missions truly makes a difference in two worlds. I once had a man tell me that it really didn't matter whether he gave or not.

I recognize that his non-giv-

ing might be overcome, but just let that spirit, that negative, selfish attitude spread and what you will find is that giving makes a difference and not giving makes a tragic difference.

3. Reciprocal. All gifts given to Jesus will return. It was Jesus who said, "Give and it shall be given unto you." The gifts that will come back to your life will be reshaped, refashioned, and enlarged. God will bless you for blessing his work.

2. Personal. One of the reasons why I give is because I recognize that when I needed to be saved, someone else gave in order for me to hear. The gift that I so freely received must go on.

1. Confessional. My Jesus gave so much to me. I suppose that it is possible for each of us to measure our gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in dollars and cents, in hundreds, thousands, or even millions — but how does your gift or mine look when we lay it alongside the broken, sin-burdened body of Jesus? *Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.*



Aymara: ancient culture in modern world

EL ALTO, Bolivia (BP) — Kent Shirley sweeps his hand over the landscape of one-room, adobe-block houses checkerboarding the area like shoeboxes scattered across a fitting room floor.

"They build them wherever they can find a place," says Shirley, a Southern Baptist missionary. "Some have bought the land, but most are squatters. There's no way they can afford it."

Kent and his wife, Elaine, work among the Aymara, a people group living high in the Andes Mountains on the Altiplano (High Plateau) around Lake Titicaca. The Aymara spread across four countries, but the Shirleys work not far from the epicenter of Aymara culture near El Alto, Bolivia.

The Aymara is an ancient culture straining to find its place in a modern world. Antiquated farming practices and poor soil force the Aymara to search for hope in the city.

"More than 40,000 people a year are coming to El Alto looking for work because many of them are starving on the Altiplano," says Shirley. "When they get here, they have no place to go."

"They set up plastic tarps ... until they scrape together enough adobe blocks for a house. It is a sad situation," Shirley says.

Yet, it is "a great opportunity. When the Aymara move to the city, they are open to new relationships."

If conversions are to occur on a grand



STREET WITNESS — Southern Baptist missionary Kent Shirley pauses on the street in La Paz, Bolivia, to witness to a witch doctor who has set up shop in front of an abandoned storefront. (IMB photo by Matt Jones)

scale it will happen through other Aymara Christians. "They understand the culture and speak the language in a way we never will, so we invest a lot of time in discipleship and training."

The Shirleys originally accepted a different assignment, but while in language study the International Mission Board (IMB) asked them to work with the Aymara.

Soon after their arrival in Bolivia, the Shirleys became strategy coordinators and now lead a team of church planters. The

Shirleys believe a church-planting movement will begin through new and existing churches.

"We see many lay leaders and churches catching a missionary vision," he said.

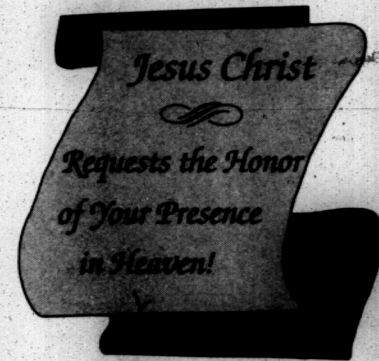
Of the 2.3 million Aymara, more than two million have no idea who Christ is. They are animists, worshipping "Mother Earth" and other natural elements.

"They feel they have to appease their gods or their crops won't produce," Elaine says. "They have no hope because they live in fear. It makes me desperately want them to see the truth."

Kent and Elaine use chronological Bible storying to teach the Aymara about Christ. "In using Bible stories, we have to address every element of what they believe," Kent says. "We start with Job and show them God has command over all spiritual forces. We then go to the beginning of the Bible and lay a foundation for a Biblical worldview, preparing the Aymara to understand the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is constant discipleship."

It also is constant love. The Shirleys knew that sharing the Gospel with the Aymara would be difficult, so they prayed the Lord would help them.

"When we found out we were going to work with the Aymara, we began asking God to give us a great love for these people," Elaine says. "We want to see them through his eyes."



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. *(I have sinned.)*
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Storefront ministry providing effective witness

SOUTHEAST ASIA (BP) — Christian workers are using business savvy to reach the people of a restricted-access country in Southeast Asia with the message of Christ.

Partnering with national Christians who work as shopkeepers, Chris and Kim Lee (not their real names) set up a store at the border between their own country and a neighboring, more open, country.

They minister to the nearly 5,000 people who cross from the Lees' country monthly. Their goal: create a Christ-like environment, making the shopkeepers' store a "platform to give leverage to anything they would say about Christ," explains Lee.

"We started the store very simply, with about \$1,500 worth of stock," says Lee.

The Lees taught shopkeepers basic lessons on buying, selling, and finding good products that would interest people crossing the border. The results have been amazing.

Despite political restrictions, the longstanding reign of Buddhism, and growing nationalism in their country, the Lees' ministry is reaching many people who would not hear the good news otherwise.

The Lees have confronted intimidating odds using a sim-

ple, effective method: they put love into action.

Would-be buyers, accustomed to being cheated and looked down upon, find the store "a safe, non-threatening haven," Lee says. Visitors notice these businesspersons are "doing good deeds and caring" without expectation of reward — unlike clergy and monks who are paid to behave kindly.

Christian shopkeepers go the extra mile, allowing visitors to stay long after the shops close, often overnight. "There have been times the shopkeepers were averaging 20 people a week spending the night," says Lee.

During these after-hour visits, and sometimes during the day, they share Christian literature and show evangelistic films. Because of their intentional ministry, says Lee, "when the shopkeepers talk about Christ, it enhances the witness."

In addition to demonstrating love for the people who visit, shopkeepers' lifestyles bear witness to the difference Christ makes in their lives, raising questions among the visitors.

"[They] wonder why, for example, a shopkeeper isn't cheating on his wife," says Lee, and why the shopkeepers are treating the border-crossers "so good." Each incredulous question provides an opportunity

for sharing Christ's message.

The Lees realize that these initial efforts at engaging the people with the Gospel are critical to future church planting. The message is spreading. Newer groups of believers are seeking out older believers, receiving instruction and training, and taking it back to their villages.

Thankful for growth, the Lees know great challenges lay ahead. They pray for a strong indigenous model for the underground church now developing in the Lee's focus country.

They also know the clock is ticking. Chris and Kim feel as though they have "a window of opportunity, perhaps five years" before the country is completely closed, unless a great revival takes place.

"That is our sense of urgency," he says. Still, they do not ask for relief from persecution.

"We're not praying that politically things will change," Lee says.

"Persecution, in almost every instance, has caused things to spread rapidly," he adds.



ALMS FOR MONKS — Buddhist monks collect alms from temple-goers during a religious service in Southeast Asia. The gifts from worshippers are one of the only means by which the monks support themselves. (IMB photo)

Marvin K. Lee, 88, dies

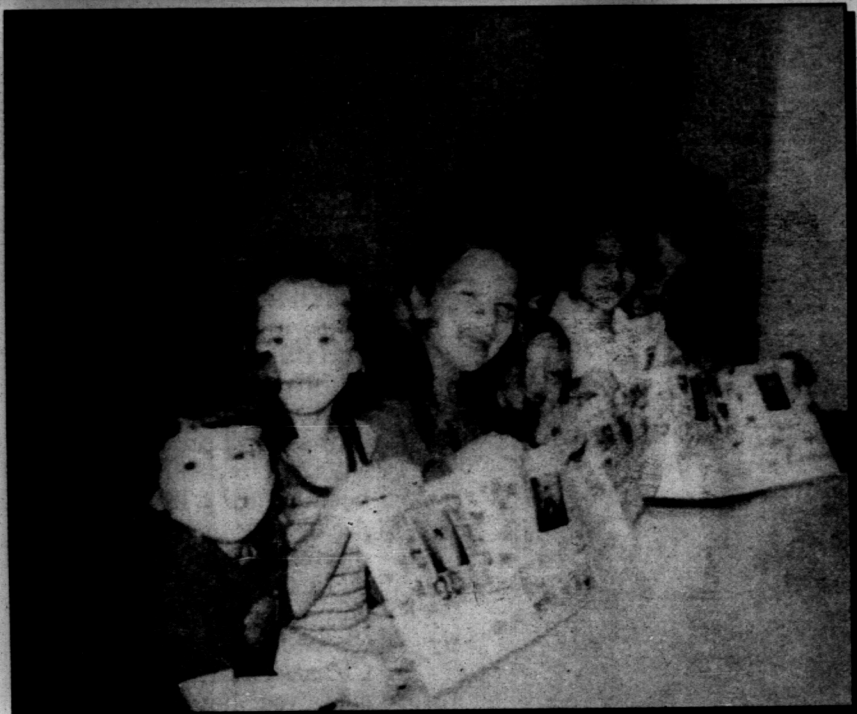
Marvin K. Lee, 88, of Carriere, died Saturday, Nov. 24, at the Forrest General Hospital, Hattiesburg.

Lee pastored churches in George, Lamar, Pearl River, and Lawrence counties and served as director of missions for Jasper, Calhoun, and Pearl River counties. He had a part in the ordination services of 87 pastors and 156 deacons.

His wife Evelyn Powell Lee of Carriere; sons, Daniel Lee of Carriere, and David Lee of Slidell, La.; daughters, Kathy Lee McNail of Montevideo, Uruguay, and Karen Lee Waddington of Duvall, Washington; five grandchildren; and four great grandchildren survive Lee.



Lee



First and second grade GAs of First Church, Pascagoula

The first and second grade GAs group from First Church, Pascagoula recently made a special banner to send to an elementary school in Manhattan, New York. The girls (pictured) are Anna Laurin Harrison, Taylor Tingle, Taylor Odom, Sara Madson, Mary Kathryn Lawrence, Madison Olsen, and Kaleigh Younger. Leaders are Melissa Green, Angela Corder, and

Jennifer Merrill. The girls also expressed their love and appreciation to the local firefighters with homemade goodies.

Leesburg Church, Morton, will present Come, Let Us Worship the King, Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. The children's program, Cool Carols for Kids, will be presented on Dec. 23 at 7 p.m. For additional information, call the church at (601) 854-5306.



Northcrest Church, Meridian, observed a ribbon cutting and building dedication for its new multi-purpose building on Nov. 18. There is 14,790 square feet on the first floor that includes eight new classrooms, bathrooms with lockers and showers, a regulation basketball court, and a 1,600 square-foot industrial kitchen. There is 2,600 square feet on the second floor that includes additional classroom space, storage, and mechanical rooms.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Lakeshore Church, Jackson, will hold its 2nd annual Live Drive Through Nativity on Dec. 13-15. The times are 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday will be extended hours from 6-9 p.m.

The sanctuary choir will present the Christmas cantata The King Is Born on Dec. 16 at 6 p.m. For more information, call the church office at (601) 373-6677. Joe Crout is pastor.



The GAs and RAs of First Church, Itta Bena, recently collected cans of food to observe world hunger month. The group donated over 300 cans to the Leflore County Association food pantry. Pictured (from left, bottom row) are Haley Upchurch and Carrie Webster; (top row) Kallye Hudgens, Kevin Mueller, Taylor Upchurch, Alex Fulgham, and Kyle Mueller; and not pictured is Brittany Reed. Leaders are Gail O'Neal, Angie Cather, and Richie Fulgham. George E. Meadows is pastor.

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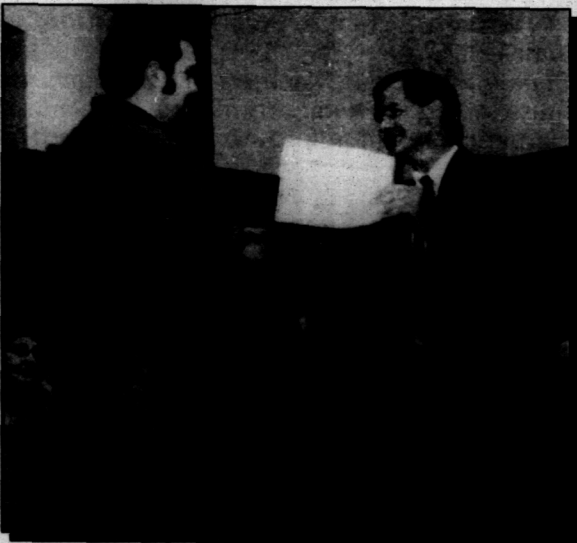
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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Shackleford, Harris, and Castle

Wyatte Church, Holly Springs, ordained Clint Harris to the ministry on Oct. 28. Lee Castle, interim pastor, gave the charge to the church; John Shackleford, pastor of Valley Grove Church, Tupelo, gave the charge to the candidate. Harris has been called to Crenshaw Church as pastor. Pictured (from left) are Shackleford, Harris, and Castle.



Keeton and Easley

First Church, Vardaman, licensed Jason Keeton to the ministry on Oct. 28. During the morning worship service of Nov. 11, Dale Easley (pictured, right), pastor, presented the certificate to Keeton, who is presently serving as minister of youth.

Tomnolen Church, Eupora, ordained Terry Wills to the ministry on Sept. 9. Wills has been called to Union Church, Webster Association, as pastor. Pictured (from left) are J. B. Rowe, pastor; Wills; and Byron Dean, chairman of deacons.



Rowe, Wills, and Dean



Ashmore, the Peaveys, and Chisholm

Central Church, Meridian, ordained Joe Peavey as deacon on Oct. 28. Pictured are Leon Ashmore, deacon chairman; Jennifer and Joe Peavey; and Danny Chisholm, pastor.

Ordination services were held at Pleasant Hill Church, Calhoun City, Nov. 18, for Donny Smith and Andy Cannon. Pictured (from left) are Kenneth Armstrong, pastor of College Hill Church, Vardaman; Smith; Cannon; and Danny Spratlin, pastor of Pleasant Hill Church.



Armstrong, Smith, Cannon, and Spratlin

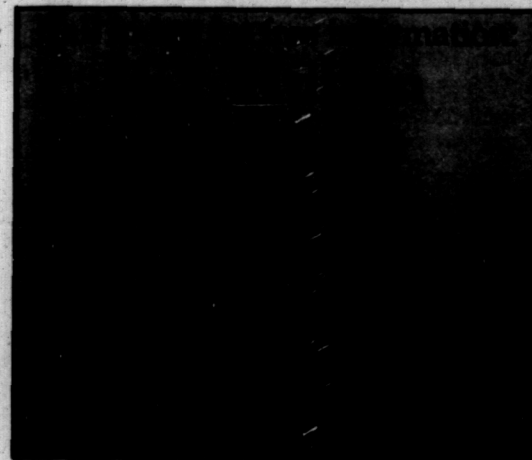
Liberty Hill Church, Pope, recently recognized Lewis Snider (pictured left) for 37 years perfect attendance and Leon Anthony for 34 years perfect attendance in Sunday School.



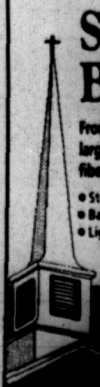
Snider and Anthony

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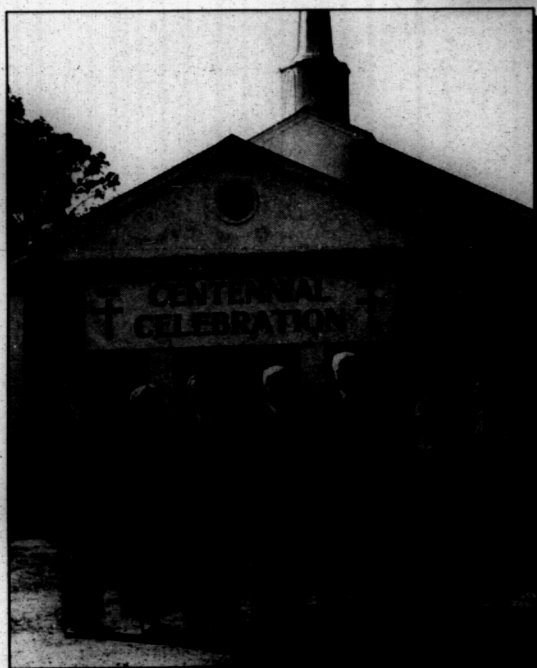
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JUST FOR THE RECORD



Steering committee of First Church, Soso

First Church, Soso, held special services and events for its centennial celebration, Aug. 5 through Nov. 18. The church was 100 years old on Nov. 24. Steering committee (pictured, from left) are Robert and Carolyn Sullivan, co-chairmen; Billy Hyatt, chairman of deacons; Bill Collins, minister of music; Ralph Graves, pastor; Lois Black; and Connie Powell. Norma Hathorne is not pictured.

A candlelight service will be held at Newhebron Church, Newhebron, at 6 p.m. on Dec. 23. David Wilkinson is pastor.

The Life of Christ — from Birth to Ascension will be presented on Reflection Lake at Gilead Retreat and Conference Center in Lafayette County, Dec. 18-27 at 7 p.m. For further information, call (662) 224-8518 or (662) 234-4465.

The choir of Barnes Crossing Church, Saltillo, under the direction of Harrell Hill, music minister will present the cantata, All Through the Night, during the 11 a.m. worship hour on Dec. 23. J. D. Johnson is pastor.

Light of the World, a joint Christmas presentation by the music ministries of Broadmoor Church, Madison, and New Hope Church, Jackson, will be broadcast on WAPT-TV on Dec. 24 at 11:05 p.m. and Dec. 25 at 6 a.m.



Hillsboro Church, Scott Association, celebrated its 103rd anniversary on Oct. 28. Speakers were former pastors Howard Benton, Pearl; and Herbert Eichelberger, Walnut Grove. Special music included Homecoming Day, a musical by Irene Martin, Harperville. Benton (pictured) is speaking. Doug Pitts is pastor.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS



Blue Mountain College ministerial association officers

The Blue Mountain College ministerial association officers for the 2001-2002 year include Brad Ligon, Blue Mountain, president; Tim Mims, Pontotoc, vice-president; Brad Lytle, Blue Mountain, secretary/treasurer; Terry Floyd, New Albany, music minister; Neil Shepherd, Columbus, missions outreach; Anthony Adams, Byhalia, missions outreach; Kent Shepherd, Steens, discipleship director; and Jared Patterson, Belden, athletic director. Douglas Bain and Ronald Meeks (not pictured) serve as faculty representatives.

The Office of Continuing Education at Mississippi College (MC) is offering a series of reviews to assist students who are preparing to take the MCAT Exam on April 20. Topics to be discussed are Inorganic Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physics, Microbiology, Cell Biology, Genetics, Organ Systems, Molecular Biology, and Evolution. The review will consist of 20 sessions. A full-length practice MCAT Test will be given on April 13, 8:30 a.m. The cost for this review is \$245 for MC students and \$285 for others. There is a special early registration fee of \$220 for those registering by Dec. 10. Pre-registration is required. For more information or for registration forms, call Darryl Longabaugh at (601) 925-3301 or e-mail: continuing-ed@mc.edu.

Mississippi College (MC) will hold December graduation ceremonies on Dec. 21, at 7 p.m. in A. E. Wood Coliseum. Approximately 229 students are expected to graduate from the school. Tom Williams, Chair of the Department of Teacher Education in the School of Education will be the speaker.

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

CHURCH AVERAGING 100 in Sunday School seeks full-time associate pastor/minister of music and youth. Please send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 2878 Old Hwy. 27, Vicksburg, MS 39180; or fax to (601) 636-7574.

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH, BRANDON, is seeking a minister of music. The church is located on Highway 43 South between Pelahatchie and Buckett. Please submit resume to: Antioch Baptist Church, 2350 Highway 43 South, Brandon, MS 39042.



William Carey College (WCC) students are pictured as carolers in a scene from the WCC Theatre, School of Music and Hattiesburg Arts Council presentation of A Christmas Carol. The show will be presented Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 15 at 2 p.m. at the Saenger Theatre in Hattiesburg. For more information or reservations call (601) 582-6221 from 1-4 p.m.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking full-time pastor with seminary degree and some experience. Send resumes to First Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, 1710 McArthur Drive, Mansfield, LA 71052.



Mississippi College Student Government Association (SGA) recently received a gift from Merchants and Farmers Bank that will help furnish furniture and equipment for the new Student Lounge in Alumni Hall. The gift was presented by Tim Alford, president of M&F Bank. William Waller is president of the SGA. Pictured (from left) are Alford and Waller.

UNLIMITED COMMENTARY

Editor:

I am concerned with the unlimited use of Biblical commentary in the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

The apostle Peter tells us that the Holy Scriptures are of no private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20-21). The Bible tells us two times that there is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof is death (Prov. 14:12 and Prov. 16:25). Could this be caused by the substitution of man's wisdom for the wisdom of God?

Wouldn't it be much better to teach all believers to go directly to God's throne of grace and ask for guidance by the Holy Spirit who wrote the Scriptures to guide in their interpretation than taking the writings of some human commentary which might possibly generate confusion?

I am concerned that well-meaning, well-educated writers are unintentionally generating confusion especially among our new converts. This is causing a problem for all believers and it is not to be taken lightly.

Read 1 Cor. 2:5 and 2 Cor. 11:3. Can we not look for more confusion if this practice is continued?

Warren Foster
Brandon

TRUTH'S MINISTRY

Editor:

Thirty years ago one of our Southern Baptist ministers of

music had a vision to use young people to reach others with the message of the Gospel. I read recently with interest and sadness that the musical ministry of Roger Breland and Truth will soon end.

You may be like me. Many who will read this were saved or called to ministry during a Truth concert. Perhaps you had a son or daughter who recommended his or her life because of the message of this ministry. Maybe you are simply impressed due to the musical excellence of their program and the caliber of the musicians. Many who are in concert ministry today are former members of this group.

My suggestion is simple. Why not take the time to write a letter of appreciation to Roger Breland for his obedience to the Father, faithfulness in the task, and integrity during the journey? Share with him and the staff how this ministry has influenced your life in Christ. I am sure it would mean more than we could ever know. The address is: Truth, P.O. Box 9459, Mobile, AL 36691 or truth@truthmusic.org.

Rob Davis
Harrison, Ark.

REMINDERS

Editor:

In view of recent trends in attitude and the way preachers operate and the large number of divided congregations in Baptist churches, I am deeply concerned and submit the fol-

lowing reminders for their consideration.

(1) You are not the "head" of the church, God is; (2) you and other staff members are employees of the church and accountable to the congregation; (3) the church should operate as a democracy not a dictatorship; (4) do not measure success by the size of the building or congregation; (5) acknowledge that you are not always right. Christians have every right to question your ideas; (6) you do not have a monopoly on talking with God and discovering his will for the church; (7) do not encourage the congregation to over-obligate themselves financially. God will not always take care of your mistakes; (8) do not use or brainwash people for selfish reasons; (9) worship services should show reverence and dignity to God; (10) church leadership should keep the congregation fully informed and welcome their opinions at business meetings; (11) assure that deacons fulfill key leadership roles in all recommendations and decisions; (12) you should show in a godly manner that you welcome and respect members' opinions; (13) remember that your behavior outside the pulpit can negate your ability to influence people.

Successful ministry is determined more by the preacher's character and by how he gets along with people than by his preaching ability. Actions speak louder than words.

Richard Benton
Brandon

FOUNDATION IMPORTANT

Editor:

Job 34:4 says, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" Our foundation is of utmost importance. Poor foundation equals poor structure. As a university student I came to accept evolution. I even argued with creationists, believing in my correctness. Ten years ago I began to study about creation. I've concluded I was indoctrinated to believe false conclusions (evolution) derived from faulty assumptions. My confusion arose from uniformitarian assumptions (i.e. processes we see today have always worked the way they do today). Many will argue evolution is fact. Why then the theory of evolution? If fact, scientists would call it the law of evolution! If evolution occurred (molecules to man) at least one natural law would be broken. The law of biogenesis, states, "life only comes from prior life." Have you ever observed otherwise? God's existence is revealed by nature, but science is fallible and cannot replace the authority of God's Word. To those who believe in evolution: Job 38:21 "You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!" Humility replies Job 42:3 "Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." Genesis is the foundation for understanding our relationship with God.

Lawrence Raborn
Edwards



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Mission Facts International Missions Emphasis 2001

4,946 MISSIONARIES

At the end of last year, Southern Baptist gifts through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering were being used to help equip, send, and support 4,946 missionaries. These missionaries are serving among 1,015 people groups in 153 countries. Of these missionaries, 879 were appointed in 2000.

6,525 NEW CHURCHES

Southern Baptist missionaries and their Baptist partners overseas recorded 6,525 church starts in 2000, an increase of 37.4% over the figure in 1999. The total membership of these churches exceeded 5.6 million, a 14.4% increase compared to membership in 1999.

451,301 BAPTISMS

Last year a record number of baptisms — 451,301 — were recorded by International Mission Board missionaries and their overseas partners. This was an increase of 24.1% compared to the number of baptisms in 1999.

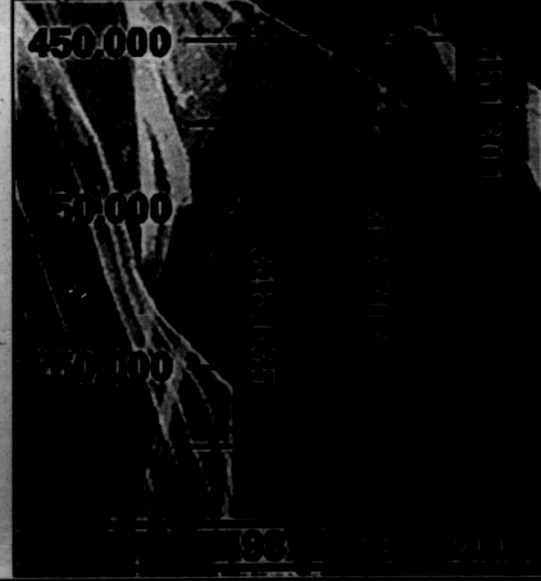
Total Mission Personnel



New Churches Overseas



Baptisms Overseas



Muslims in Holy Land coming to Christ

JERUSALEM (BP) — Secretly gathered behind closed doors, they study their Bibles. Professing belief in the Scriptures can result in violent attacks or worse.

They are hundreds of Muslims across Israel and Palestine who have come to

extended families of parents, uncles, aunts, and sometimes multiple wives.

This is not the kind of movement Southern Baptists are likely to see covered on their six o'clock news, and it does not yet constitute a church planting movement.

Nevertheless, the new responsiveness has created a sense of urgency and expectancy among Christian workers in the region.

"I've been working among these people for 30 years, and I've never seen anything like this," one Southern Baptist worker marveled. "God is moving here like we've never seen before. It is the first movement in which Muslim-background believers are reaching out to other Muslims."

Seeing the potential for a large-scale awakening, Christian workers are praying desperately, and carefully fanning fragile flames of faith that seem near igniting into a mass movement.

To what do Christian workers attribute the dramatic increase in responsiveness among Muslims?

One worker notes that responsiveness to the Gospel increased dramatically after the Gulf War ended in 1991 and Christians worldwide began praying for the 10/40 Window, which includes most of the Muslim countries.

Another influencing factor, he believes, has been the years of violence between

Israel and the Palestinians. The almost-daily trauma has left many searching for answers.

Conversions are not limited to Muslims. Many Israelis with Jewish background have also accepted Christ as the Messiah.

Christian workers estimate that Messianic Jews now number more than 6,000, and the number of their meeting places is growing at about 30 percent a year. In addition, Arab Baptists mostly from Catholic or Orthodox backgrounds have established 18 congregations.

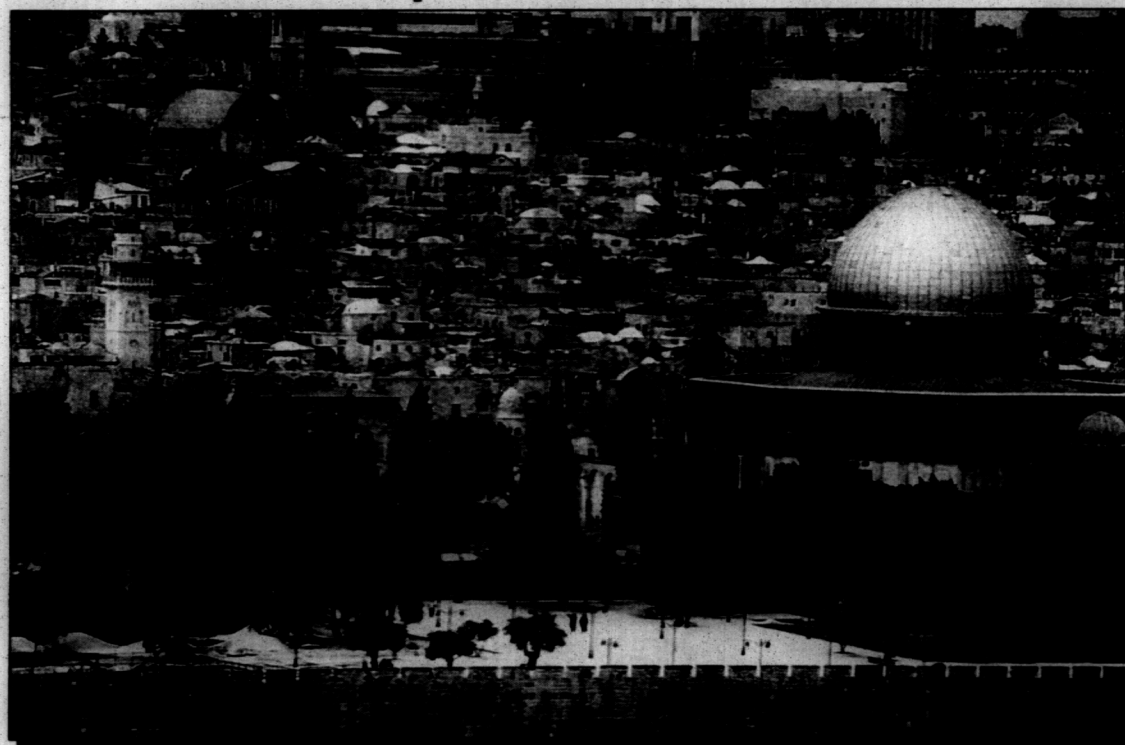
As with most faith-related stories from the Middle East, neither the Christian workers nor new believers want names or places publicized for fear of reprisals. Their fears are well founded.

In the past year, radical Muslims have firebombed the homes of believers, burned their cars, run down their children, destroyed their crops, and committed other acts of violence against them.

One incident resulted in a teenaged girl being severely burned. As is often the case, the attack served as a catalyst resulting in even more Muslims coming to Christ within the girl's home village.

These modern evangelists seem no more deterred by threats or suffering than did Christ's disciples in the first century.

"I'm afraid, but the Holy Spirit gives me courage. The Lord is always with us and opens the way for us," says Christian convert, Phillip (not his real name). "We may go to bed without supper for a week or a month, but he gave his own Son for us."



HOLY SITE — The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem is one of the most sacred sites in the world — to three major religions. While the site currently contains an Islamic shrine, it is also a religious landmark to Jews and Christians. (IMB photo)

Moore heads 2002 women's conferences

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Popular author and teacher Beth Moore will speak during two National Christian Women's Conventions set for April 18-20, 2002, in Fort Worth, Texas, and Sept. 26-28, 2002, in Birmingham, Ala. Christian entertainer Babbie Mason will perform in Fort Worth, with Larnelle Harris taking the stage in Birmingham.

"Seek Me, Know Me, Return to Me" is the theme of both conventions sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. Cost for the conference is \$65 per person, and registration has begun. Group rates are not available.

Convention highlights also will include a performance by Ballet Magnificat, a Christian ballet company from Jackson.

For more information or to register, call (800) 254-2022 or visit www.lifeway.com.

know Christ as Savior over the past year. Small groups of new believers scatter across the troubled region as they share a newly found faith with others in their

Prayer warrior has vision for Bhutan people

WEST VIRGINIA (BP) — When Esther Hill (not her real name for security reasons) is burdened to pray for a people group, her memories and experience already span an entire continent.

As Hill looked out across a cemetery in Uzbekistan, she noticed the "empty eyes" of Uzbek passersby.

"I stood there in the open market and just began to weep," she says. "I said to God, 'I join your Son Jesus in weeping over this city. When I get back to West Virginia, I'm going to be faithful to tell this story so people will come to this place and tell your story.'"

As director of West Virginia's Woman's Missionary Union, Hill did tell the story and later, when Mongolia was chosen as the focus of a statewide prayer partnership, she started praying — even with the possibility of only three or four Mongolian believers in the world.

When the project ended seven years later, Mongolians were coming to Christ in record numbers. Church-planting movements sprang out of dead soil.

"All those thousands of Christians are my children," Hill says with tears. "They belong to me because I was a part of praying them into the kingdom. That includes the missionaries to them as well. They're my responsibility."

When Bhutan was chosen as West Virginia's next prayer focus, Hill says someone warned her, "You've taken on

more than you can handle. It's not going to be like Mongolia."

Undeterred, Hill and West Virginians began to pray for Bhutan, a tiny Tibetan Buddhist kingdom nestled in Southeast Asia's jagged Himalayan peaks.

Only a few portions of the Bible have been translated into Dzongka, the language of Bhutan's "Drukpa" people, or "people of the dragon."

Bhutanese culture has continued unchanged for thousands of years, and outside influences, including Christianity, are unwelcome. With the number of estimated believers barely enough for Hill to count on one hand, the situation looked bleak.

Hill and West Virginians

pressed on. They prayed Scripture for Bhutan. They divided the country into 10 regions — one for each association — and spread prayer requests through calendars and newsletters. They prayed for translation work, for strategy coordinators, for Christian workers to feel at home in Bhutan's harsh climate.

Most of all, they prayed for God's light of truth to shine on the "Land of the Thunder Dragon."

When Hill visited Bhutan on a prayerwalk, she was not prepared for what she experienced. "The oppression and evil was there," she recalls. "I felt unnerved, like someone was watching me."

Her hotel wallpaper was

covered with handpainted Buddhist symbols. Outside dogs barked and snarled throughout the night. The temples she visited had shelves crammed with idols.

The faces, especially those of the children, haunted her.

At one village, "children came from everywhere," she says. "I could hardly move in the crowd they gathered around me. So I had them write their names on the pages of my diary."

"As I walked away, I looked at my diary, and I thought my heart would burst because I had their names! I can pray for them by name! The future in this country is in the children."

God is working in Bhutan.

According to Hill, Bhutanese government officials recently met to discuss the spread of Christianity in Bhutan. The Jesus film has been translated into Dzongka and a new Christian worker, using her own words, said she felt "at home" in Bhutan.

Hill's vision for Bhutan is like the description of the river in Nahum.

"I can see the truth flowing through that country like the river that flows through it," she says. "I see the children laughing, playing, singing 'Jesus Loves Me.'"

"I can see the old people who sit in the temple yards working their prayer beads, recognizing the truth and jumping up, praising God, rather than sitting in fear."



Esther Hill

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The person of Christmas

Luke 2:4-20

By J. Michael Barnett

Red poinsettias fill the sanctuary and cover the front flowerbeds of First Baptist Church with a beauty that is only seen at Christmas.

However, while admiring red poinsettias, I am alarmed by a red flag. It is the red flag of syncretism — the notion that all the world worships the same God.

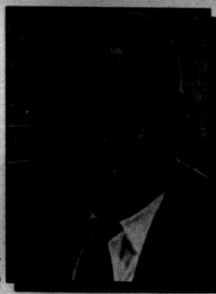
Since September 11, the media and even the ministry in many circles have propagated the idea that the world's religions are basically unified under the same deity. The Christmas story tells otherwise.

Christmas is about Jesus and his salvation. Mary the virgin mother of Christ, Joseph the

carpenter, the Roman tax collector and the angels all were used by God to manifest the providential uniqueness of the Lord Jesus.

Luke 2:10-11 focuses on the shepherds' experiences. With the red flag of syncretism waving high this season, the shepherds' experiences illustrate the work of the one true God in bringing people to himself.

First, the shepherds received a word from God. To the shepherds he spoke by means of angels. Today we have the Bible through which God speaks. Before anyone can meet Jesus there must be a word from God. Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of



Barnett

God" (Rom. 10:17). The angels spoke God's Word to the shepherds.

The content of the angelic message was from Scripture. In the city of David a Savior would be born. When the shepherds heard this, Micah 5:2 may have jumped into their minds.

Micah prophesied that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of Israel's ruler. They may have considered Isaiah 43:11, "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no savior," thus recognizing that this baby born was indeed the promised one. The angels also said this baby is "Christ the Lord."

The anointed and sovereign God of all creation is the Savior of the world. The content of the angel's message was biblical and presented the saving fact of the Lord Jesus.

The message was also confirming (v. 12). Salvation is always confirmed by realities.

Christ the Lord was manifested in a manger. Today, Jesus is manifested in the fruit of salvation and the conversion wrought by his heart-changing work.

A heavenly host heralded the celebration of the message. They were saying, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth, good will toward men."

The New American Standard version gives a more literal translation, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased." The celebration is that God extends his peace to people who are objects of his favor.

While the red flag is waving high it is important to proclaim the Word of God to the world. Jesus is God's anointed Savior and Messiah. After the shepherds received the Word of God they responded by faith (v. 15).

They made haste to see the Lord Jesus. It is as if they were desperate. They left the sheep behind and made their way to

the manger. A faith response to the revealed Word of God will always be with desperation. These shepherds knew they needed to get to Christ and they did so with haste.

After their response, the shepherds repeated the message of the angels. Luke 2:17-18 says the shepherds told the story of the child abroad. The Lord had confronted them at the shepherds' fields and converted them. Now they were sowing the Gospel in fields that were white unto harvest.

The shepherds' conversions pull the red flag of syncretism off the mast and reveals the only way to have a relationship with the one true God.

The Word of truth must confront sinful men. Faith must be born in them and their lives forever changed. This is how Christmas is really celebrated. The Christmas story tells us of the one true God and his Savior.

Barnett is pastor of First Church, Ocean Springs.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Keeping the Ten Commandments

Deuteronomy 4:44-5:33

By Carleen McGraw

This lesson deals with Moses' setting before the Israelites a copy of the Ten Commandments that God had given them years earlier. After 40 years of wandering, his laws had not changed nor had they been modified in any way, but the generations had changed. This generation Moses is addressing in chapter five was 20 years of age and younger when the original commandments were given. Now he is addressing those 60 years of age and under. Moses wants to be certain this younger generation fully understands that God expects them to obey the same commandments he had given their fathers.

In Exodus 19 and 20 you will find the record of the awesome happenings when God first gave the commandments. Now, the first thing the people are to remember is that "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery" (5:6). God is well acquainted with these people. Now he has some laws by which they are to live, and his law is never arbitrary — it is an absolute.

The first commandment is simple and profound: "You will have no other gods before me" (5:7). Considering all that God had done for them, all the events, the miracles that God had performed just for their benefit before and following their flight from Egypt, why



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would God even suggest that they, of all people, would ever think of worshipping a God other than Jehovah? God knew the people!

The second commandment builds on the first: "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on earth beneath" (5:8). When God spoke this commandment, the people must have been reminded of the time their fathers had brought their gold to Aaron so that he could fashion a golden calf. God had told them he was a jealous God, and he would not tolerate any violation of his holiness and sovereignty.

The third commandment states, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name" (5:11). God's name is a sacred trust, and they were not to use it in any way that might violate its sanctity.

The fourth commandment states clearly that they are to

"Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you." In the Exodus account, this commandment is based on the fact that God created all things in six days and blessed the seventh, "making it holy," and setting it apart for a special purpose.

While the first four commandments concerned man's duty toward God, the next six concern man's duty toward man. "Honor your father and your mother..." — a commandment with a special purpose. "You shall not murder." "You shall not commit adultery." "You shall not steal." "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor." "You shall not covet..." Moses said, "These are the commandments the Lord proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more" (5:22).

The law God had given the people was part of the covenant relationship between God and his people, and

demanded absolute obedience; it also expressed God's love for his people.

Not many people who read the Ten Commandments today as they are set forth in Exodus and Deuteronomy will have any problem recognizing them and their place in history and laws of our own nation.

The purpose of the Law was never to save, but to make us fully aware of our sinfulness and inadequacy. God's law is here to stay, and it does not change with every generation. It is the same today as it was in Moses' day.

We can take heart in the fact that Jesus said, "I am come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Jesus Christ — not the Law — is the Savior of all who will place their faith in him.

When we place our faith in him, he will help us be obedient to his laws. When we fail — and we will, many times — he stands ready to forgive any repentant sinner.

McGraw is a member of First Church, Louisville.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

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CZIGVX AGKV:AGKV

Clue: B = C

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Six: Fifty-Six.

Cannatas offer tips for serving on mission

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP) — With one question, God uprooted every idea Sam and Ginny Cannata had about ministry.

Twenty years and two countries into their missionary career, the couple was fleeing political turmoil in Ethiopia when God asked, "What did you leave that was really eternal?"

Cannata defended himself by recounting the masses to whom he had preached, the tracts they had distributed, the medical clinics they had operated. He even recalled the 16 days he spent in an Ethiopian prison.

God revealed to Cannata that while his work had been good, it was ineffective and shallow. "He seemingly said to us, 'You were only scattering seeds. You were not really planting seed,'" Cannata said. With that revelation, the focus of the Cannatas' ministry shifted.

"God led us to some people who were into discipleship, and it just changed our whole missionary philosophy and approach," Cannata said. "We decided for the rest of our lives we were going to spend our time mainly with small groups of people, investing our lives in those folks."

The Cannatas devoted the next 24 years to discipling new believers throughout Africa. Their missionary career reads more like a novel than a typical missionary résumé. They served in six countries, three of which they had to flee.

"We've gotten run out of more countries than most missionaries get assigned to," Cannata said.

They have endured obstacles that would have sent many missionaries home broken. Toward the end of their first missionary term, Cannata was conducting a medical exam on a child in Zimbabwe when the child coughed in Cannata's face. A severe eye infection developed, and he lost sight in his left eye.

"That was the only time that we ever questioned God," Ginny said.



Ginny (left) and Sam Cannata

"We said, 'Lord, is this the way you treat people who volunteer for missions?'" Cannata said. Then, in 1989 the couple's son, Stanley, died in an accident while serving in Ethiopia with the International Service Corps (ISC).

"God showed us in Ethiopia that he is in control," Cannata said. "God had a hundred ways that he could have prevented [the accident], but we just felt like it was God's time for Stan to go to him."

"We learned the sovereignty of God more through that experience than we ever had before," Ginny said. "You have to just believe that he is sovereign."

The Cannatas retired from career service in 1993, but returned to the mission field in 1999 through the ISC program. After 38 years of service, the couple said God is still teaching them.

"The Lord has taken us on a pilgrimage," Cannata said. "He never stops teaching us, and here I am, 72 years old, and he is still teaching me things!"

There are some basic facts the Cannatas have learned that are vital ingredients for surviving the mission field:

◆ It is not possible to be a missionary without planting your life among the people. "We believe that in order to invest our lives in the lives of other people they have to know us. We have to live among them, and they have to see us in our everyday lives in order for us to make an impact," Cannata said.

"That's what Jesus did. He took 12 guys out of all the people in the world and invested his life for three years," he said.

◆ Missionaries must know that God has called them to service. "You have to know the Lord's called you there," he said, "and both (husband and wife) have to know that. A wife cannot go on her husband's call."

◆ Through all circumstances, missionaries have to rely on the knowledge that God is in control of everything.

"Tough times come, but if you know the Lord is in control and if he is the one who put you there, then you know he is capable of keeping all the promises he made to meet your every need," he said.

◆ Finally, maintaining a maturing relationship with God is a necessity.

"You have to have a growing, vital relationship with the Lord," Ginny said.



Businessman using success to win lost souls

PANAMA CITY, Panama (BP) — Harold Finch concentrates on the face of the Argentine businessman sitting in front of him. He listens to the man's frustrated life and the emptiness he found after gaining material success.

"That was me you were talking about," the man says. Tears drop from his cheeks to the lapels of his dark-blue sport

coat. "I was once a sailor so I know what it means to be a ship with no rudder. I am that ship," the man says.

In just a few moments, the man's life sets a new course, plotted with meaning and purpose, guided by Jesus as his Savior.

"I never get tired of that," says Finch. "It happens at nearly every seminar."

More than 10,000 people have accepted Christ during Finch's mass evangelism efforts over the past 18 months in Latin America.

People crave success. They flock to his seminar "Discovering the Secrets of Great Success" because Finch is the embodiment of success.

At age 28, he was a project director for the Apollo space program. He pioneered the computer system that protected astronauts and lunar vehicles from the extremes of space.

He then earned a doctorate in education and founded Johnson County Community College in Kansas, one of the top community colleges in the United States.

Later, he developed two businesses recognized as among the top 500 in the country.

"God has used everything in my life to prepare me for what we are doing now," says Finch.

His itinerary reads like a Latin American geography quiz. In the past 12 months, he's spoken 135 times to 25,000 professionals, hosting seminars in Mexico, Ecuador, Argentina, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

His calendar is almost full for 2002, and appointments are beginning to fill 2004.

Why the demand? "Dr. Finch's visit opened many doors for us in the professional community," says Manuel Sosa, an International Mission Board (IMB) missionary working in Ecuador.

"His résumé is very impressive, and it attracts people of the highest social, economic, and professional status."

He draws professionals looking for an edge. While he shares leadership principles to help them become more effective, he also shares the key to eternal success.

"He finished by explaining professional success is meaningless without eternal success," says Karen Bradley, an IMB missionary serving in Argentina. "He explains how to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and then prays with them."

A 10-week course follows the seminars. Both practical and spiritual, productivity

increased in one plant more than 60% after workers completed the course.

More significant to Finch are the thousands throughout Latin America who have committed their lives to Christ.

"Mass evangelism can be so impersonal," says Finch. "That is why we put a heavy emphasis on immediate follow-up even before we commit to doing a seminar. We depend on local believers and missionaries to work with the people after we are gone."

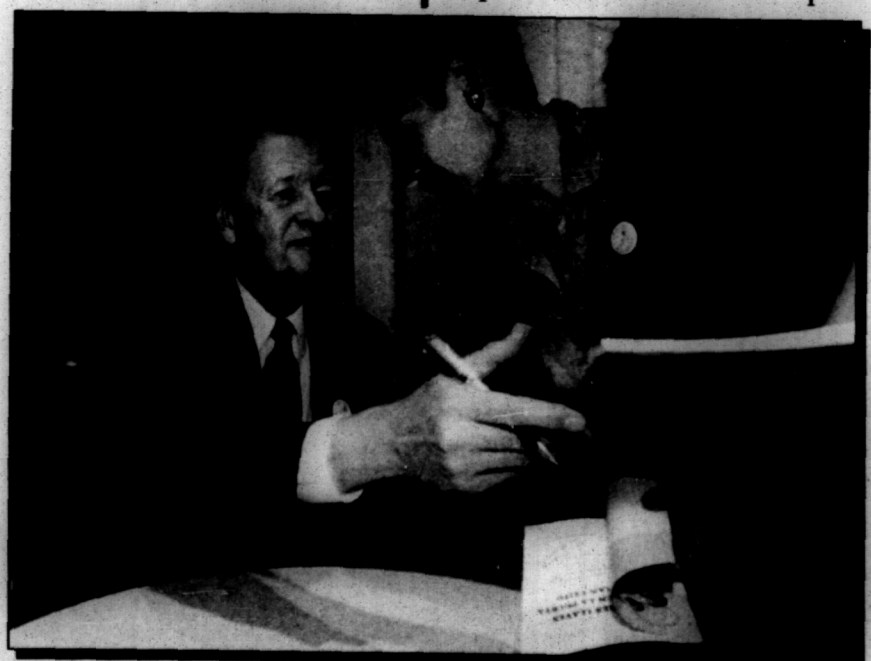
The seminars have been so successful that Finch believes more are needed.

"We could use at least five more people out here doing what I'm doing," he says.

"All they need is a Great Commission interest and a willingness to share with other professionals from their position of leadership," he continues.

"There is such a great need. Surely God already has those people in mind," Finch says.

Harold Finch will hold a conference at IMB headquarters in Richmond, Va., on Feb. 28-March 1, 2002. For information on attending, call Wendy Houston at (800) 999-3113, ext. 1544; or send e-mail to whouston@imb.org.



SECRETS OF SUCCESS — Everywhere Harold Finch goes, he attends book signings, meets with government officials, and visits high school and college students. More than 10,000 people have accepted Christ as a result. (BP photo)